

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An automatic sampler comprising:
a plurality of sample vessels; and
a needle for collecting liquid samples sequentially from the sample vessels, said needle containing a non-noble base metal and having a an outer surface coated with a coating material that has a chemical activity lower than a chemical activity of the base metal of said needle, wherein said coating material includes a noble metal including platinum, a platinum group metal, or gold that is plated or deposited on said needle.

Claim 2 (Cancelled)

3. (Currently Amended) ~~The~~ An automatic sampler ~~according to Claim 1~~ comprising:
a plurality of sample vessels; and
a needle for collecting liquid samples sequentially from the sample vessels,
said needle containing a non-noble base metal and having an outer surface coated
with a coating material that has a chemical activity lower than a chemical activity of

the base metal of said needle, wherein said coating material includes a synthetic resin coating that is coated on said needle.

4. (Currently Amended) The automatic sampler according to Claim 1, wherein said coating material includes a quartz thin film that is formed on an inner surface of said needle by a chemical vapor deposition method.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~The~~ An automatic sampler ~~according to Claim 1~~ comprising:

a plurality of sample vessels; and

a needle for collecting liquid samples sequentially from the sample vessels, said needle containing a non-noble base metal and having an outer surface coated with a coating material that has a chemical activity lower than a chemical activity of the base metal of said needle, wherein said coating material includes a non-noble metal that has a chemical activity lower than a chemical activity of iron and is plated or deposited on said needle.

Claim 6 (Cancelled)

7. (Original) The automatic sampler according to Claim 3, wherein the synthetic resin coating includes polyetheretherketone.

8. (Original) The automatic sampler according to Claim 5, wherein the non-noble metal includes nickel or chromium.

Claim 9 (Cancelled)

Claim 10 (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) The automatic sampler according to Claim 1, wherein said automatic sampler is ~~used~~ a component in an instrument for liquid chromatography.

Claim 12 (Cancelled)

13. (New) An automatic sampler comprising,
a plurality of sample vessels; and
a needle for collecting liquid samples sequentially from the sample vessels, said needle containing a non-noble base metal and having an outer surface coated with a coating material that has a chemical activity lower than a chemical activity of the base metal of said needle, wherein said coating material is a noble metal including platinum, a platinum group metal, or gold.

14. (New) The automatic sampler according to Claim 1, wherein said automatic sampler is included in an instrument further comprising:

a liquid analysis apparatus for receiving the liquid samples collected by the needle; and

a rinsing means for rinsing the needle after collecting the liquid samples.

15. (New) The automatic sampler according to Claim 14, wherein the liquid analysis apparatus comprises a liquid chromatograph apparatus.

16. (New) The automatic sampler according to Claim 3, wherein said automatic sampler is included in an instrument further comprising:

a liquid analysis apparatus for receiving the liquid samples collected by the needle; and

a rinsing means for rinsing the needle after collecting the liquid samples.

17. (New) The automatic sampler according to Claim 16, wherein the liquid analysis apparatus comprises a liquid chromatograph apparatus.